

TO: HAUETER CLARK FROM: HANFORD JIC DATE: Thu Jun 29 2000 12:58 EDT  
06/29/00 THU 09:42 FAX 509 376 9809 Joint Info Center  
JUN 29 '00 09:34AM B.C.E.M. EOC 3011 P.1 001



## BENTON COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES

651 Truman Avenue  
Richland, Washington 99352  
(509) 628-2600

Emergency Management  
Fax: (509) 628-2621



Southeast Communications Center  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 06/29/00  
Contact: Deanna Westover  
(509) 628-0303 fax (509) 628-2621

TIME: 9:30 AM

### 750 to 1,000 Responders Assist with Benton County Fire

Richland, WA- -

More than 750 emergency and response personnel from numerous local and outside agencies have been fighting a natural cover fire in Benton County since Tuesday afternoon. Multiple agencies are working together to protect lives and property.

Benton County Emergency Management and the Department of Energy are providing periodic updates on the status of the fire and the locations of evacuees. BCEM encourages people to tune to KONA radio on 610AM for current information and to avoid use of telephones except in the case of an immediate emergency.

Red Cross Shelters at Central United Protestant Church in Richland, Southridge High School in Kennewick and Housel Middle School in Prosser will remain open as needed for persons evacuated from their homes. For information about the location of evacuees, the Red Cross Information Line is 783-6196.

Benton County Commissioner Claude Oliver said, "We have an outpouring of emergency personnel coming in to help assist residents and protect property in the area." The response effort includes long hours by firefighters, law officers, public officials and emergency services personnel.

The Department of Energy and local communities are maintaining a public information line at 376-8116.

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Hanford Patrol estimates that 60 to 100 employees are in an essential category for the facilities effected by closure. The essential employees traveling to work today can use Route 4 to reach their work locations on the Hanford Site. The Yakima Barricade was open to essential personnel for access from Vernita Bridge or Highway 24.

Employees should expect to be stopped at the Wye Barricade or the Yakima Barricade and have their identification checked as essential employees. Rattlesnake Barricade south of the 200 West Area is closed. The Wye Barricade is open. Roadblocks for the 300 Area just north of the Richland city limits are located at Cyprus and Route 4 South and at the George Washington Way gate. Restrictions are still in place on the movement of essential personnel so that no adverse health effects are experienced due to smoke.

A power outage at approximately 12:30 a.m. on Thursday affected portions of the Hanford Site and the DOE Emergency Operations Center at the Federal Building in Richland. The loss of alarm protection on the Site was only momentary and all reset immediately. Hanford Patrol units were in the locations of the tripped alarms and reported no problems.

The loss of power was attributed to a Bonneville Power Administration switch with no major impacts to the Hanford Site expected.

More information will be made available, as it becomes known. Media inquiries should be directed to the Hanford Joint Information Center at (509) 376-3322; the phone number for Public inquiries is (509) 376-8116. Also, Emergency broadcast information can be heard on KONA Radio on 610 AM and 105.3 FM.

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